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ABSTRACT

Although diversity has become a social reality in U.S. higher education, certain issues concerning diversity in classroom settings have not been addressed. Despite increasing multiculturalism and diversity awareness in the U.S. educational system, the literature is still derived primarily from either monocultural assumptions or superficial examination. A project explored diversity issues and pedagogical concerns on a deeper level, examining the problems the faculty faces regarding diverse student population from the views of Asian expatriate faculty vis-a-vis American-born faculty. Subjects (23 Asian and Euroamerican faculty) were asked to complete a questionnaire on diversity issues, and interviews were conducted allowing subjects to elaborate on their thoughts. Questions addressed include critical incidents (epiphanies) occurring on campuses, (un)fair treatment, promotion/backlash of diversity, institutional biases, intellectual clashes, and pedagogical difficulties derived from cultural differences. Based on the hermeneutic perspective, collected data will be thematized to provide a thick description and "verstehen" (situated understanding) of diversity phenomena in United States higher education. (Contains 11 references; the survey instrument is attached.) (NKA)

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Through a Looking Glass: An Examination of Asian and European American Faculty Perceptions and Pedagogical Concerns of Their Diverse Campus

ED 404 693

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Abstract:

Allison and Heriocker (1994) contend that diversity is a double-edged sword: on one hand, implementing diversity-based programs could increase appreciation for diversity and the embracing of differences; on the other hand, mishandling of diversity could serve as a catalyst for ingroup versus outgroup rivalry and hostility. In addition, Albert and Triandis (1985) contend that students and teachers should be aware of cultural differences and cultural orientations from other cultures. Diversity has become a social reality in the United States' higher education. However, certain issues concerning diversity in classroom settings have not been addressed. Despite increasing multiculturalism and diversity awareness in the United States' educational system, the literature is still derived primarily from either monocultural assumptions or superficial examination (see, for example, Samovar & Porter, 1995).

This project explores diversity issues and pedagogical concerns on a deeper level. To explicate the phenomenon under study, the project examines the problems the faculty faces regarding diverse student population from the views of Asian expatriate faculty vis-a-vis Anglo-American faculty. Questions addressed by faculty members include critical incidents (epiphanies) occurring on college campus, (un)fair treatment, promotion/backlash of diversity, institutional biases, intellectual clashes, and pedagogical difficulties derived from cultural differences. Based on the hermeneutic perspective, collected data will be thematized to provide a thick description and *verstehen* (situated understanding) of diversity phenomena in the United States' higher education.

Through a Looking Glass: An Examination of Asian and European American Faculty's Perceptions and Pedagogical Concerns of Their Diverse Campus

Recent demographic shifts, particularly the increasing number of under-represented ethnic groups (e.g., Asians) joining the professional workforce, have changed corporate and institutional culture in certain areas in the United States. For example, in the California State University system, the University of Rhode Island, the State University of New York system (the largest state school system in the whole world), and the Ohio University, Asian faculty members make up the highest percentage of tenure-track positions among all minority members (i.e., in order of percentage, Asian, Black, Hispanics, and Native Americans).

Diversity, rather than similarity, has become a social reality in corporate America (Rosenfeld, Giacalone & Riordan, 1994). However, despite the fact that cultural diversity of the workforce has become a major organizational theme of the 1990s (Rose, 1995), few studies reflect the changing social reality. Most intercultural organizational studies that are related to higher education or pedagogical concerns remain monolithic. Furthermore, current studies on diversity in the workplace either do not go beyond conceptualization (e.g., Hopkins & Hopkins, 1994; Limaye, 1994) or only scrutinize diversity issues from functionalist perspectives (e.g., Kim & Sharkey, 1995).

Despite the increasing awareness of multicultural education and an increasingly diverse school workforce, specifically Asian faculty members, few empirical studies have focused on the subject matter. Daniels (1991) found that fewer female professors receive tenure than do male professors. He further states that there are enormous amount of students and faculty members who claim to have faced sexual and racial bias. However, he does not specifically discuss the

"racial bias" that is encountered by Asian faculty members, the "majority" of the "minority" as some people claim, in relation to their colleagues, institutions, and students.

The study seeks to sketch the *Zeitgeist* of the emerging transcultural/cultural diversity phenomena that exist in the United States institutions of higher education. The study aims to address the concern that both Asian and Euroamerican faculty members face in dealing with cultural diversity. Specifically, a phenomenological research method is adopted to gain understanding of Asian and Euroamerican faculty members' lived experience.

Literature Review

Blank and Slipp (1994) note that Asian-American are the fastest growing group in the United States. Asian-Americans, Blank and Slipp added, have a high rate of participation in the work force. Blank and Slipp's claim can be supported by the statistical data obtained from several institutions of higher education in the United States. For example, even in a Midwestern university such as the Ohio University, which is located in a non-diverse rural area, Asian tenure-track professors constitute 5.8 percent of the entire faculty. The percentage of Asian faculty is higher than Black (combination of African and African American) (4.7 percent), Hispanic (1 percent), and Native American (0.3 percent) faculty members. The statistical census in the Ohio University is not atypical. The report has demonstrated the increasing number of Asian faculty members and the fact that Asians make up the highest percentage in the entire minority faculty workforce.

In light of the phenomenon of burgeoning diversity in the workplace, several issues have emerged regarding the interaction between "majority" and "minority" employees (e.g., Asian

expatriate faculty members). Allison and Herlocker (1994) contend that diversity in the workplace is both a "dangerous" and an "opportunity-filled enterprise" from management's vantage point. They further explain that diversity could be a double-edged sword: on one hand, implementing diversity-based programs could increase appreciation for diversity and the embracing of differences; on the other hand, mishandling of diversity could serve as a catalyst for in-group rivalry and hostility. Allison and Herlocker also argue that the rewards for diversity are potentially greater than those for homogeneity; that is the case if organizations can "successfully" implement superordinate categorization strategies which encourage interdependent cooperation among culturally/demographically diverse employees (1994, p. 650). Depiste the advocacy that cultural diversity in the workplace can gain "competitive advantage" (see e.g., Herriot and Pemberton, 1994) and the importance of integrating multiculturalism into teacher education (see e.g., Fox & Gay, 1995), diversity related problems in the workplace/higher education institutions remain unsolved. In fact, studies indicate different attitude toward cultural diversity in college campus based on an individual's ethnic affiliation. Kossek and Zonia's (1994) study manifests that race/ethnicity significantly affects an individual's attitude toward policies that are fostering diversity, and that race/ethnicity explained difference in attitudes toward diversity more than demography. They found that Euroamerican faculty members held the least positive attitudes concerning employer's efforts to promote diversity. Blacks/African American faculty members were significantly more inclined to favor diversity than other ethnic groups. Additionally, Kossek and Zonia's research indicated that though Hispanic's attitudes were slightly less favorable than that of African American, the two

groups are quite similar. Although Asians reported more favorable attitude toward diversity in the higher education than Whites, Asians' attitudes were "often closer to those of Whites than they were to those of Blacks and Hispanics" (p. 330). Kossek and Zonia cited DeVos's contention that Asian cultures can be typified by a strong need to achieve. Kossek and Zonia speculated that if Asians believe that the implementation of diversity has lowered enrollment or hiring standards or decreased opportunities for qualified Asian candidates (such as the University of California at Berkeley's quota limitation to reduce Asian students' enrollment), then diversity efforts may not be favorably perceived.

In addition to the attitudinal difference toward cultural diversity in higher education institutions and the discouraging policy at certain universities (such as U.C. Berkeley's case in which they do not want "too many" Asians), as Kossek and Zonia indicates, employees with Asian background are facing various kinds of stereotypes and institutional biases. Yang (1994) argues that educators should be aware that recent rhetoric about diversity in the United States often does not consider the continuing discrimination and mistreatment of Asians. Ku stated (1992) the solution to the racial discrimination toward Asian Americans is not for them to adopt the victim ideology, separatism, and political correctness of other ethnic minority groups, but to define their identity and acknowledge their success. Ku claims that honest assessment can provide useful lesson for the future. However, Ku did not address that the "assessment" and criteria for the evaluation (such as performance appraisal, and verbal contribution to the meeting) might have already imbedded in institutional bias and Eurocentricity. Given the cultural differences, one can not assume that the established "assessment" or evaluation criteria were the

best way to evaluate an Asian faculty member's performance or lack thereof. For example, Asians might value listening more than speaking without knowing much about the subject being discussed at faculty meetings, while Euroamerican believe that they should "talk it out." Consequently, Asian faculty member's reticence might be perceived as "unassertiveness" or "lack of oral contribution" (by Euroamerican's standard).

Language and cultural adaptation are closely related to cultural diversity on college campuses. Based on Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty's works, Stewart and Mickunas (1990) conclude that language is a major concern in phenomenological investigations. This project employs a phenomenological perspective, so the influence of language in ethnically and culturally diverse workplaces will be discussed. In addition, both language and ethno-linguistic identity play an important role in diversified workplaces (see, for example, Gudykunst, Ting-Toomey, Hall & Schmidt, 1989). Language is also a critical aspect of intercultural organizational communication. Language can be used to facilitate social identities (Eastman, 1985) or as a barrier which inhibits interpersonal understanding. Giles, Taylor and Bourhis (1973) note that sharing a language influences ethnic group identity more strongly than sharing the same culture. In support of this contention, Hogg, Joyce and Abrams (1984) argue that individuals perceive in-group members (that is, people who speak the same language) more favorably than out-group members (e.g., Asian expatriates who, presumably, do not share the same language system).

In addition to the language aspect and in-group versus out-group membership, social identity merits attention. Bastien (1992) employed Giles' accommodation theory to investigate

the connection between social identity and language and employees' reactions to changes in organizational culture due to corporate acquisition. Bastien found that change in organizational culture takes place either immediately or does not happen at all; it does not happen gradually across the whole organization. In addition, change brought about by a corporate acquisition is dependent on employees' decisions to accommodate themselves without conflict to the new culture of their employer's acquirer.

Another important issue that constantly surfaces in the intercultural literature and that closely relates to this project is the notion of cultural adaptation and the process of en/de-culturation. Kim (1995) postulates that (inter)cultural adaptation is a complex and dynamic process and multifaceted phenomenon. She notes that both "internal (intrapersonal)" and "external (social/environmental) conditions" should be taken into consideration. The intrapersonal system and the environment are interacting and influencing each other simultaneously (p. 176).

Kim further explains that, because of acculturation (i.e., learning to adjust to the new host culture) and de-culturation (i.e., "unlearning" one's previous culture) an expatriate must consciously work to adapt to his/her new host culture. The expatriate is in a state of entropy, which can be manifested in emotional uncertainty and anxiety. She notes that the process of cross-cultural adaptation is a continual resolution of intrapersonal stress and a psychic transformation.

Research Questions

Based on the current literature pertaining to the foci of this research, the following research questions were formulated:

RQ1: What do Asian and Euroamerican faculty members describe as being cultural differences that affect communication within their higher education institutions?

RQ2: What do Asian and Euroamerican faculty members report as being the diversity-related issues faced by employees in their workplace?

Method

This study seeks diverse discourses and polyphonic voices rather than monologic linear explanation. A qualitative triangulation method is employed to probe co-researchers' *lebenswelt* and to gain *verstehen* of diversity related issues in the U.S. higher education. Data/capta collection includes open-ended questionnaire, ethnographic observation, and in-depth interviews.

The project involved two phases. First, participants were asked to complete a questionnaire which was designed with an emphases on organizational culture and diversity related issues. Second, interviews were conducted allowing participants to elaborate on their thoughts and interact with the researcher. Interviews provided additional information that respondents might not have mentioned for the open-ended items in the questionnaire. These interviews included on-site participant observation and telephone interviewing. Because co-researchers (i.e., participants) lived in different states (from East Coast to West Coast), some interviews were conducted via telephone.

The author interviewed a total of twenty-three Asian expatriate and Euroamerican

faculty members. All of them were college professors and all the Asian expatriate faculty members speak English as a second language. The first set of the thematization was generated from interviews with ten Asian faculty members who were either assistant or associate professors at various universities in the United States; and the second set of capta included interviews and questionnaires from Euroamerican co-researchers who worked at different institutions of higher education in the United States. Both Asian expatriates and Euroamerican participants were selected under the condition that they taught on a diverse campus, where either themselves were the ethnic minority or they had to interact with minority colleagues and students on a daily basis.

Steps of Thematization and Data/Capta Analysis

The analysis of collected data analysis involved two steps. I read through each informant's responses and sorting the data according to recurring themes. Thematization was based on the similarities or patterns manifested through participants' descriptions of their organizational culture and critical incidents related to cultural diversity they encountered. Examples and illustrations from the responses were selected to demonstrate how the themes emerged.

Second, after general themes were determined, the data/capta sets were divided according to the ethnic background of the respondents. The process of reading through the interviews and questionnaire information to determine recurring themes were done repeatedly. Hence, the ongoing process of phenomenological reduction and hermeneutic (interpretation) circle came into play. After this process was completed, the results of the analyses were examined in terms

of whether the themes that emerged reflect the point of view of the Asian participants or the Euroamerican participants.

Because some respondents' narratives included sensitive or controversial information, to protect the co-researchers' confidentiality and job security each respondent's identity is coded with three to four letter initials. The first character is given according to the alphabetical order and the sequence of the interviews. Thus, it bears no resemblance or association whatsoever with the co-researcher's first or last name. The second letter indicates the ethnicity of the co-researcher, and the third, the type of occupation. For example, AAF stands for the first interviewee who is an Asian faculty member; CUF stands for the third Euroamerican faculty participant.

Thematization

The analysis of the responses to the two research questions and phenomenological reduction process yielded the following themes--cultural identity, language barrier, cultural adaptation, adjusting norms and rules.

Cultural Identity--Double Consciousness

Cultural identity is a pivotal concern that was addressed repeatedly by the co-researchers. For example, while Asian faculty participants attempt to "fit in" to their institutional culture in the United States, they find themselves constantly embroiled in the struggle between maintaining their "cultural identity" and assimilating to the mainstream culture. One of the female participants confessed the effort she has to endure:

> I think it's something you always have to remind yourself, you have your cultural identity, you want to preserve everything you value very much, you want to be part of that, and at the same time, the issue of adaptation to the organizational culture, largely to mainstream culture in some way, and not giving up yourself.

GAF's narrative echoes Dubois' contention of double consciousness--a split feeling between a minority's realization of how people from the hegemonic culture perceive them, and an awareness of their own cultural pride. While GAF holds on to her cultural identity, she also seeks to cope with cultural differences:

> I first see myself as an academic person, as a teacher, as a professor; there is some universal value that I hold strongly . . . but the issue of identity in ancient Chinese is always there; it's always there, you can't ignore it, it's always there, I always was made conscious of my students' reactions to my accent, when I am interacting with students or faculty of different ethnic groups, it's always there, but I feel in a lot of way, I feel proud of myself, being the second Asian faculty in the department, as I am the only the Chinese. [There are] very few Asian faculty on this campus overall, because I can offer from my own experience, some perspectives that teacher and students are not able to see. Yeah, I feel I have a positive role, but at the same time, if you do have the sense of minority, minority in a different way.

Despite the fact that GAF considers herself to be "very lucky" because she has received "lots of support," she also had "seen couple of Asian faculty who don't seem to integrate very well with

others." Comparing her interaction with people from the hegemonic group, GAF finds herself having stronger feelings towards other marginalized group. She attributed this to:

> We have common background, although we have differences in terms of ethnicity and religion, but it does not matter to us, we feel more comfortable when we talk about each other, and when we speak well about each other, and we tried to help each other in whatever way we can.

Having a stronger cultural identity as a member of an ethnic minority group is another point that was commonly shared among Asian participants. As one of the co-researchers illustrated:

> I feel strongly tied with people of ethnic background other than White. I don't know why. Maybe it's because I am one of those; maybe it's the sense of identity thing . . . I feel like, in some way, we are lower power people, we are all lower power people, we are struggling for same thing, identity issue, and working on the balance of the mainstream culture and your own culture. So there is something in common there, and also I feel that we should help each other out.

Having presented the Asian respondents' cultural identity and double consciousness, we should shift the focus to the Euroamerican perspective. I cite two distinct examples to illustrate issues regarding cultural identity in the United States. CUF, a female Euroamerican faculty member who teaches at a culturally diverse state university on the West Coast, brought to light different concerns in relation to cultural identity. Her utterance explains why cultural identity might affect the construction of curricula in American higher education:

> There is much discussion at the trustee's level and the Chancellor's office about eliminating all the remedial course work . . . And, I think in many ways that is a subtle, or acceptable way to express racist attitudes and culture bigot attitudes. And, but it's a safe way to do it. And, I think what happens is the complaint of our stereotypical expectations about people because of their culture identity [in these courses].

BUF's observation mirrors Collier's (1994) conception of "ascription," which is one of the properties of cultural identity. Collier holds that "ascription" entails stereotypes and the process by which we attribute identities to individuals. In short, cultural identity is formed by how others view us. BUH's example reflects how school decision makers' selection or omission of certain classes is perceived by some faculty to have been based on cultural identity.

The concern for language is, indeed, problematic in American higher education. The following example, narrated by HUF, a professor from a computer science department, demonstrates a common phenomenon which exists in a departments or college that has a large numbers of international students:

> . . . language is constantly a barrier. If you finally can get over with it, then that's a type of positive experience . . . You see that with foreign students that come in. At first they seem very, very slow, and then about a year or two they are finally catching on to the language, I think. They begin doing really well in classes and so.

CUF, an Euroamerican female professor who teaches on a culturally and demographically diverse campus, provided a different concern at the faculty level. She also used a phenomenon

that goes on at her institution to exemplify the presence of "lower level of racism" which is related to language barriers:

> For those immigrant members of the faculty, they are frequently criticized for not having good enough English, so a lot of students complain that students have difficulty understanding the faculty. Other faculty, rather than encouraging the students to develop their listening skills, [work] against [colleagues for] whom English is not their first language.

How, then, do Asian faculty in the U.S. perceive this intercultural communication barrier or obstacle? As the aforementioned example illustrates, the primary element that constitutes ethnolinguistic identity or lack thereof is the efficiency of language versus language barriers. As most Asian respondents in this study indicated, language is the most important communication barrier. For example, CAF contends that language and "American culture" is the most common problem for those students who come over to his cultural center to seek assistance:

> I think the most important problem is the language problem. Secondly, they want to understand the American culture and the communication style. I think these two are quite important, and yes, I am quite surprised over the course of years that the biggest problem is the language barrier.

The language barrier is not just a recurring difficulty that students have to overcome, but it is also a problem that troubles Asian faculty members, specifically those who have different cultural assumptions about communication style. AAF, a male Asian professor who teaches at a state

university on the East Coast, explained how an Asian verbal style creates a barrier for the Asian faculty members:

> [Most of the Asian faculty] are not vocal at meetings . . . Basically due to the cultural background, they are not used to confronting people. And, they are not used to arguing for their sake, or for their own good.

The differences in verbal styles and how language can create barriers or boundaries for Asian faculty can be seen by BAF's incident as well. BAF's and other Asian faculty respondents' narrations illuminate the pressure of Asian workers to "Americanize" their communicative style and to outperform their peers. They described how their lack of large quantity of talk at faculty meetings has been criticized as "lack of oral contribution." They thus experience difficulties in receiving positive reviews. As BAF depicted,

> For example, a very typical example, like I said. Lack of oral contribution is an excuse. [The department chair] thinks that she can hire a minority, but s/he has to be very strong (in term of academic performance). . . . the conscious discrimination, the bias, for the Asians to be in the same status as the Whites; and then the Asians have to be much superior/better than they are (the Whites) and then the Whites will support you. Thus, she grabbed the chance to turn against me.

Cultural Adaptation

The uncertainty of adapting to different cultures in a diverse workplace is, as one of the respondents put it, "inevitable." Several respondents disclosed their problems in dealing with people of different skin color and from different cultural backgrounds. However, the extent to

which Asian faculty perceive their cultural adaptation self-reflexively is another matter which the study wishes to bring to the readers' attention. Interestingly, perhaps not surprisingly, most of the Asian expatriate respondents in this study contend that they are the ones who have to adjust to the American culture, rather than expecting the people from the host culture to adjust. FAF held himself accountable for initiating all adjustments and adaptations. It is his belief that only then will a mutual adaptation process among different ethnic groups gradually unfold:

> The thing is that first of all, as a minority person working in an environment where I am a minority member, I think what I do is: start to adapt as I am adapting to the new environment. I am bringing with myself my traditional baggage or whatever, because that's always subconsciously communicated to them. So, through this kind of interactive process, they gradually understand me better, and I think would change their perceptions. I don't think my students would evaluate me exactly the same way as they would evaluate a White professor. Why? I made my effort and through my interaction with them they also develop a better understanding of my background and my approach, so even though sometimes I do things differently, they accept that. That's why I said it's a two ways street even though I have to do some adaptation and change. But at the same I affect their perceptions and they change.

One of the Euroamerican professors gave a comment that matches FAF's contention of taking initiative. In her advice to a prospective minority employee who might join her state university, she wrote "If you do join, find out quickly who the others on campus are who value diversity and create opportunities to socialize (don't expect them to initiate--you must) [notation

original])." Nevertheless, she also extended her comments with the caveat, "Have low expectations for friendship at work."

A similar notion of a "two-way street" in the cultural adaptation reoccurred in GAF's lived experience:

> (Personal network) that is not a problem in Asian countries . . . I do my own thing and they have to conform to my style, but here [in the US] you have to conform to their style. Theoretically, it runs two ways, but because you are a minority, you don't want to be excluded or to be persecuted.

GAF, however, looked at his experience of cultural adaptation as part of the "Americanization" process. GAF's depiction revealed the submerging paradox of diversity versus conformity:

> This is another kind of institutionalization: they use White people's standards to hire people and evaluate annual performance. Thus, the people they hired have been quite Americanized. For example, they hire another Asian faculty member in my department. They hire him because they think he is very aggressive. And they think his personal trait is really good. So, even they said they want to diversify. Speaking of diversify, you are supposed to find people who have different styles, but the people they hire turn out to be very aggressive. I myself, the reason I was hired is because of my Western style . . . much of my communicative style is quite similar to theirs. I know how to smile, shake hands, and know how to sell myself. So, I was selected/hired.

BAF employed the "beauty contest" and "presidential election" analogies to describe his organizational culture. Conformity and popularity are vital to an Asian faculty's survival in his

culturally diverse state university. The pressure of being "a better teacher" than the people from the hegemonic group was a conspicuous lived experience in BAF's *lebenswelt*:

> In terms of teaching, you need to be better than them [meaning the "White folks"]. Because, if they want to discriminate against you, teaching is probably the first thing they will get you. Because . . . they use democratic process to make decision to evaluate your performance. In other words, to decide/judge whether someone is a good professor, it's almost like a "beauty contest." If you were an Asian and you can't win the "beauty contest" then you can't win the contest . . .

BAF later added the "presidential election" metaphor to describe the consequence of popularity. BAF contends that an Asian faculty ought to "Americanize" his/her teaching style, if s/he wants to survive in the U.S. He suggested that teaching expectations varied depending on which courses are (or have been) assigned to the Asian faculty member to teach:

> Yeah, it's like a beauty contest, or presidential election. They don't select you based on your political platform, but your popularity or your appearance. So, as an Asian, you can not give them any excuse to discriminate against you. You need to win in terms of your teaching evaluation. It depends, for example, in terms of intercultural communication, I don't think it will be a problem, because they assume you are from a different culture. In terms of organizational communication, they assume you have to teach what American organizations want, and what kind of skill American organization would use, and they don't care about your foreign background. Thus, first of all, you have to have good teaching record; secondly, you have to "Americanize" your style.

However, coming from Euroamerican professors' perspectives, specifically when they have to interact with international students and colleagues on a daily basis, they are wrestling with expatriates' cultural adaptation and academic performance from the other side of the coin. BUF, a female professor teaching at a demographically diverse campus, expressed her dilemma:

> When I look at my students--to maintain bi-, or multi-lingual competencies. And, maybe they're like falling down in English grammar or, how to use academic style for researching something. And, I'm thinking, you know, how do I wrestle with this as a teacher. I'm supposed to evaluate their work. On the one hand, I have great respect, admiration, and in some cases, I feel lacking in my own way I'm just trying to be one culture. On the other hand, I know that I consider our being in a pretty tolerant environment. And, when they get out of college, maybe they might go into an environment in the US or in the city that's not all that tolerant. And, I have a duty to help them to become competent in this culture as well.

BUF's contention is shared by another Euroamerican professor, CUF, who also teaches in a demographically diverse state university. CUF coincidentally brought up the importance of cultural expectations and a sense of "double consciousness," that some of the students who intend to be permanent residents or American citizens need to develop. Her concern echoes with the conception of "double consciousness" that a cultural minority might undergo as discussed in the previous section:

> I am quite conscious of the fact that students who intend to, who are planning to be permanent [residents] in the United States, need to learn how to participate more

> comfortably with [Americans'] expectations of the communication, there is kind of a double consciousness that needs to be developed.

This concern also goes hand in hand with another example of BUF's to illustrate a common problem in relation to American cultural norms and classroom communication style:

> It's not who talks the loudest, fastest and most will get the most participation points. And, that's pretty obvious I think to a lot of professors. But, even beyond that, really, some people may be saying they're Chinese. And, let's say they're very reticent. And, they talk about, for whatever reason, maybe they're personally shy, maybe it's linguistic stuff, maybe they're just being very polite. Let the professor talk. Well, I think it's okay. And, they can find other ways to show me, we can find other ways together for me to know how engaged they are with the material, how involved, are they learning.

However, BUF holds that, given the nature of the requirements in certain classes, Asian students or Chinese students still have to learn to adapt to American cultural norms under many circumstances. For example, regardless how much their culture praises reticence or silence, students who take public speaking class still have to talk and make speeches.

The aforementioned examples illustrate the ambivalence of Euroamerican faculty members as they think about and react to the cultural adaptations of their expatriate students. Now, attention will be turned to the perspectives of faculty members who are, themselves, expatriates. Two conspicuous examples emerging from the experiences of two Asian expatriates are cited as contrasts: one concerned with being "too Americanized" and the other with being "too Asianized."

BUF noted that, for people from marginalized groups, such as "Chinese, Black, Lesbian," just to name a few, "everyday they have to struggle with" interpreting their lifeworld by using their cultural "sense" [and still yet they are confronted by people from the hegemonic group]:

> For example, my Japanese friend is so Americanized we forget he's Japanese sometimes He's like White male in some ways. And, in probably the ways we don't like. But, then he is very typically Japanese in some ways too. And, sometimes students say well he's this or he's that, well why is he that way . . . Why does he have Japanese message on his phone too, plus English. Blah, blah, blah, you know.

BUH feels that teaching in a diverse institution has given her "more appreciation of the challenge." BUF further used another example with her other Asian colleague to illustrate the backlash an expatriate might receive if s/he does not adjust to the host culture. During our conversation, she told me that her other Asian colleague "still acts very Chinese in some ways." Though he has been in the United States for more than a decade and he received his Ph.D. here, he "remains" in his culture "in some ways." She noticed that he is quite "deferential at times in a formal situation. And, yet "very indirect" in "the way he expects and conducts his activities." She has found that this Asian colleague's "indirect" approach in areas such as grading criteria has caused confusions for his students. BUF expressed the concern expressed by other colleagues and the American style of communication that she ends up adopting in order to make her point come across:

> And, sometimes people think like, wow, why isn't he better at our culture. Because he's been here so long. And, like I've had conversations with him where, I have said to him

one time, you know, Joe Blow, I don't know how to do this in your culture; but, I'm going to tell you directly in my way. And, that, you know, I like being in a place where that can be at least openly acknowledged.

These two examples somehow demonstrate an expatriate's no-win situation--on one hand the expatriate has to adjust to the host culture, but on the other hand, he or she does not want to act too much like a member of the host culture. These two examples illustrate the equivocality of when and how much he or she should accommodate to the host culture. As indicated above, an expatriate does not want to be too "Americanized" so that members of the U.S. culture forget his or her cultural heritage, yet on the other hand, he or she should not put bilingual messages on an answering machine. So, where is the middle ground then? Where is the borderline where a cultural adaptation is too much? BUF's two narratives reflect the constant battle an expatriate employee has to face.

Personal Traits Rather Than Cultural Identity

Through the capta collection process, I found there were occasions when a respondent would refer to his or her own personality traits (e.g., "I'm shy") and there were times when a respondent would express a great deal of perplexity, wondering if the explanation for a particular experience could best be found in race/ethnic/gender characteristics or in some other "cause." Or, occasionally, a respondent would refer their hardship in the workplace as "human nature." Along with the argument that not all intercultural communication problems are derived from ethnic or gender bias, it is important to note that people from the same racial group do not necessarily share the same cultural identity. As GAF said:

We [me and the other Asian co-worker] are not very compatible. Why? I think it's not because of this Asian background, but his own personality. So, I don't think it's necessary to mingle with him. The major reason is his own personal trait. . . .

GAF's criticism of his colleague also brought to light how minority members might use different standards in dealing with people from hegemonic culture vis-'a-vis the less privileged groups:

> He has the notoriety of ever polishing. Thus, from my ethnic dignity standpoint, I feel it's hurting me. He is very snobbish, he has his own way of treating White males [i.e., he used double standards in terms of treating White people versus Asians] . . . As for me, I don't want to damage my minority race's dignity. So, I am treating him like someone who is "whiter" than the Whites.

Another Asian faculty co-researcher also discussed the animosity between her colleague, who is from the same ethnic background, and herself due to "theoretical differences" and the fact that her Asian colleague yields to her old chair's manipulation. These examples counter the assumption that individuals from the same ethnic groups tend to have a stronger shared identity.

Accordingly, FAF's close connection with his American colleagues reinforces GAF's assertion that race is <u>not</u> absolutely an essential part of cultural identity:

> . . . I equally identify with the other person who is basically white. Ethnicity is not a big part of your identity, but this is could be one of those components, the factor, but this is not all. Because I equally identify with couples of other people who are, I mean, I tell everything to them, but they are not from this [Asian] background.

In sync with Asian expatriates' identification with Euroamericans based on their personality rather ethnicity, several Euroamerican co-researchers also mentioned similar contentions. For example, one of the female respondents stated that she "responds to the person, not the ethnicity." Another Euroamerican professor/librarian even went so far to say that, in his department, where there is a constant problem of low morale among colleagues, he has maintained a close relationship with other Asian expatriate co-workers.

> There are only two non-Euroamericans in my organization. Both are Asian. I get along better with them than I do with Euroamericans. This, I realize is not common in the U.S. but is due to my own personal background and experience. I find many Euroamericans arrogant and unpleasant (Although I am not prejudiced--some of my best friends have been Euroamericans! [notation original]).

KAF shared a similar opinion that race does not constitute an essential issue in his academic field:

> I have run into White scholars, my colleagues, you know, they are very diversity-minded, very progressive, and very liberal, race is not an issue, if they have ever been an issue with race in my existence professionally, I do not perceive them.

FAF highlighted an important aspect of personality. For him, it's a "personal thing" rather than ethnicity. He talked about the different treatment he received from the students prior to the completion of his Ph.D. degree. Again, FAF attributed the change in treatment as a personal manner and the change of professional status as opposed to the racial issue:

> I think the difference is I have my terminal degree. I was just a damn TA. I am not a full time professor. I think that's what the problem was, I don't think it's really because of me, not just me, the American kids got the same kind of crap that I got. So, I don't think it's because I am an Asian, it's because I am not a full-time professor. I am just a teaching assistant. I think that's the factor not because I was an Asian. Of course, I also got students who said, well, he is using Eastern standard and tries to apply to American students and he shouldn't teach you. It only happened once, but it happened, I think, I don't take that personally, because I think no matter where you are, simply because of the difference, it can trigger some negative responses. So, you see, it's not a constant feedback that I am getting . . . I just got that probably from some pissed off students, who just did not like me and wrote something like that. So, it's more like a personal thing rather than a general problem.

Another Euroamerican professor used an example to illustrate how it can be hard to pinpoint whether the problem a minority is facing is because of his/her ethnicity or because of other issues (e.g., expertise and contributions):

> There is a story told by a woman of my campus, she was, she is, I think, Chinese, and she is in a very small department, and the department had worked to get a grant for a big research project, every one in the department except for her is given a piece of grant. She is the only person who is not a U.S. citizen, and she is also the only person who is not White in the department. So who knows, one of the issues that we have talked about around this project is it's always very difficult to know whether the focus is on . . .

because of who you are as an individual, or who you are as a member of particular class. You know, maybe the faculty just did not see how her expertise will contribute to the department project, on the other hand, no one is talking with her about it, or explicit about it.

Discussion

This study has identified several diversity-related issues which are intertwined with intercultural communication, such as the ambiguity between cultural difference vs. discrimination, cultural practice vs. institutional bias, and cultural difference vs. personal trait vs. human nature. Since the study juxtaposed Asian and Euroamerican native/expatriates' perceptions of their institutional culture and lived experience, it showed two sides of the story. For example, while an Asian expatriate criticized his Euroamerican colleagues' practice of employing institutional biases to evaluate him (e.g., imposing the expectation that he actively participate at faculty meetings), his Euroamerican colleagues expressed their concerns about him-- "since he has been in the United States for fifteen years, how come he hasn't gotten any better?" His Chinese style of conducting courses (e.g., implicit class requirements) has caused students' confusion. On one side we hear an Asian expatriate employee complains that he has been mistreated because of his ethnicity, while on the other side, we hear his Euroamerican colleague expressed her discontent of the Asian expatriate's inability to adapt American culture. Thus, based on respondents' subjective judgement of their experiences, one cannot conclude which side of the story is more "true" than the other.

Given the fact that respondents' narratives of their lived experiences have been taken out of context, it is difficult to determine whether it is culture, race, ethnicity, or gender/sex that contributes to communication barriers within a diverse college campus. There were times when respondents would express their ambivalence, wondering if the explanation for a particular incident could be best found in race/ethnic/gender characteristics or in other "causes." One has no way of knowing whether the fact that an Asian faculty member does not receive a research grant is attributable to her ethnicity or her lack of expertise. Lastly, an Asian male professor's improper public comments about a female graduate student's figure can be interpreted as reflecting the fact that he comes from a different culture where similar explicit statements would be considered "compliments"; or criticized because he has been in the U.S. for a long period of time and "should have known better." Essentially, one has no way of knowing whether cultural/ethnic/gender differences are used as a pretext or constitute the basis for communication problems. Based on the findings, the study has revealed multiple causes for "diversity related incidents." Gender/ethnicity might not be the major factors in creating communication problems in the U.S. higher education institutions.

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APPENDIX

Organizational Experience Questionnaire

INSTRUCTION: Please read and respond to each of the following questions. Provide as much information as you can. You may use additional sheets if necessary. Thank you very much for your time and assistance. The term "organization," as used in this questionnaire, refers to the following three types of workplaces: high-technology industries, health care centers/hospitals, and academic institutions.

1. Describe the working atmosphere of your organization. In your answer, complete the following statement: "Working here is like _____." Explain why you completed that statement as you did.
2. What are the common personality traits of people who have excelled at your organization? Why have they succeeded?
3. What kind of organizational value (e.g., service, community, family) does your company emphasize the most? How does your organization demonstrate that emphasis/commitment?
4. Compare your current organization with other organizations you have worked for. What do you like most about your current organization? What do you like least?
5. At most organizations, employees often share with one another some critical incident of the organization in order to help explain why the organization functions as it does. Please share one such story concerning your organization. What is the function (message) of this critical incident? That is, if I were a new employee/faculty and you shared this

incident with me, what would be the lesson that you would hope I learned from the incident?

6. Please describe your relationship with your co-workers who are from an ethnic background which is different from your own.

7. What was your best and worst experience with co-workers whose ethnic background is different from your own?

8. How would you compare your relationships with colleagues who are from the same ethnic group to your relationships with colleagues from different ethnic background?

9. Please describe your organization's attitude toward demographic/cultural diversity. In what ways does your organization seek to promote or devalue demographic/cultural diversity in your workplace?

10. If I were a minority worker/faculty member at your organization, what suggestions would you give me?

11. If I would like to implement a diversity training program in your workplace, what suggestions would you give me?